1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

(especially rain, the sky, and volcanoes), or else definitely and personally of superhuman beings. In this latter sense it is said that there are two Gods (Ing-aïtin are), the Black God and the Red God, of whom the former is kindly, but the latter malevolent. It is the special function and pleasure of the Black God to provide rain, but the Red God objects to turning on the celestial water-tap. Loud thunder is the result of the Red God trying to get to earth through the Black God's dominions in order to kill men, but the distant rumbling is the Black God saying to him, 'Do let them alone; don't kill them.' This happy fancy that the good god is near but the bad god far, which is probably no accident but due to the fundamental characteristics of the Masai mind, has doubtless saved untold suffering, for it does away at once with the necessity for human sacrifices and all similar methods of propitiating cruel powers. Besides the Black and Red Gods there is a quasi-divine personage called Naiteru-Kop, who appears to have been, if not the creator, at least the arranger of the present order of things. A man called Le-eyo appears to have been the principal patriarch, though there were also Dorobo (hunting tribes) in his time, so that he was not strictly the first man. Death entered the world owing to his selfishness and disobedience (p. 269), and, by an incident common in stories of this kind, his younger son became the father of the Masai, while his elder son lost his birthright, and was the ancestor of the inferior tribes.

The worship of the Masai, like their beliefs, seems to be somewhat vague and wanting in ceremonial, but Mr. Hollis's collection shows that they have definite prayers, and that they petition the deity more frequently and fervently than the surrounding tribes are known to do. This is confirmed by Thomson, who speaks of them howling out prayers to Eng-aï for hours together. By a custom not without parallel in other nations, it would appear that the women pray twice a day, but the men only occasionally and in grave circumstances. The prayers which are for children, rain, and victory, are addressed to Eng-aï as a distinct personality 'who is prayed to and hears.' Remarkable also is the phrase 'the highlands and lowlands of our vast country which belongs to our God.' On the other hand, the sun and moon, the morning and evening star, and the mountain clouds are also invoked, and one song says in two consecutive verses, 'He whom I pray to is God,' and 'He whom I pray to is Lenana, our medicine man.' It is difficult to say whether

1: Hollis G-5 (ca. 1894-1904) 1905
FL12 Masai FL12

we have here primitive and undeveloped religious sentiment where the personality of the deity is hardly separated from striking natural phenomena, or remnants of some old cultus of the heavenly bodies, mountains, and tribal deities preserved in a hazy way by a military race which had not paid much attention to religion.

The Masai believe that ordinary persons die like cattle, and they throw away their corpses to be eaten by hyenas[1], in the revoltingly unceremonious way common to many East African tribes. Medicine men, however, and influential people are buried, and their souls are said to pass into snakes, which are respected in consequence. Many tribes on the Nile also reverence snakes. It is noticeable that death and misfortune are not attributed to witchcraft. The Laibon is not the same as the Witch Doctor of the Bantu tribes, and it is no part of his duties to detect witches.

As the Masai men will practically do nothing but fight or tend cattle, they are naturally dependent on others for all articles, including their arms, which cannot be manufactured by women. There is among them a special tribe of smiths, called Il-Kunono, who make iron weapons, but are treated as inferiors and not allowed to marry Masai women. A somewhat similar tribe are the Dorobo or hunters.

It would appear that the military organization, the aversion to hunting, to eating game or vegetable food, and to engaging in agriculture or any productive art are peculiarities specially developed by the Masai, though some of them have been imitated by other tribes. Another peculiarity is the shape of their houses—long low buildings constructed of poles, grass, and mud, and divided into rooms by partitions. Their other customs, however, seem to tally with those of the Latuka, Bari, and Dinka, as far as differences of residence and occupation permit. Remarkable points of agreement are the nudity of the men, the shaven heads of the women, extraction of the middle teeth of the lower jaw, resting in a standing position on one leg, drinking the blood from living animals, and spitting as a sign of affection or benediction.

Linguistic evidence points the same way, though ampler and clearer information about the languages of the Nile is desirable for purposes of comparison. It is no want of respect to the labours of Sir H. Johnston and others to say that the researches of Mr. Hollis have for the first time

[1] It has been suggested that this practice may be due to a desire not to contaminate the earth by burial, but Mr. Hollis could find no trace of this idea, although he carefully inquired.

6:Thomson K-3 (1883-1884)1887
FL12 Masai FL12

abandoned, and, though meat and milk were still the main items of his eating, he could now vary it with vegetable food, obtained by his wife from neighbouring agricultural tribes. Luxuries, also, he might now indulge in. He sported a fancy snuff-box and tobacco-box of ivory or rhinoceros' horn, and delighted to rap up its contents as he handed it to a friend. He chewed tobacco (mixed always with natron), though he never smoked. Then, as often as convenient, he liked to foregather with his friends, and have a jolly carouse over beer or mead.

It is pleasant to know that with this change in his mode of life there was a corresponding alteration (very much for the better) in his views of things. He delighted to talk with the traders whom before he had gloried in killing or annoying, and would in token of good-will cordially exchange the courtesies of life by spitting upon them and being spat upon. In his conversation he showed an intelligence far superior to any specimen of the Bantu tribes. He had no suspicions, and was communicative about his affairs and beliefs. He would even at times exercise a friendly guardianship of passing traders, and was able to ward off many a disaster by judicious warning. He was not stinted in his presents, and generally gave far more than he got. He has been known even to protect strayed porters, and tend sick men left behind

The softening down of his ferocity reacted upon his face. The habitual scowl gradually died away, and was replaced by a more pleasing and genial expression. His thoughts turned more to the strange mystery of life. He, alas! had little that was cheering to look forward to. He believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, and yet had not the faintest conception of an after-life. Unlike the men of the Bantu races, he did not believe in ghosts or spirits. He had no theory of dreams, and did not imagine like the negro that when he dreamed he was really experiencing all that was passing through his brain, and that his soul or spirit was actually knocking around somewhere, having a good time of it, unclogged by his body. Moran believed nothing of that; indeed, whether he had any idea on the subject, I have not been able to determine. When the man died, he was finished utterly, except so far as he might go piecemeal to build up the body of a hyena, a vulture, or a marabout stork. The Masai believe in annihilation. To bury a corpse would, they think, be to poison the soil: it must be thrown to the wild beasts without ceremony.

9:Fosbrooke G-5 (1936-1948) 1948 FL12 Masai FL12
Kisonko

frequently fighting, contact must have been limited. But that is not the case to-day. When Mbeiya's boma was infected with measles in 1935 he hired a lorry and himself travelled to Nairobi and beyond, bringing back a Kikuyu medicine man to cleanse his boma for him. Kutata (24) is reputed to have obtained a charm to kill Mbeiya from a Sukuma witch doctor in Pare, and Letinga (25) and Balosi (26) hired a car to go and interview this doctor, in order to verify the rumour and/or to obtain charms stronger than those given to Kutata.

The cult of the laibon must therefore have much in common with the beliefs and practices of neighbouring tribes, and I put it forward as a possibility that, with further contacts, the institution may eventually end up merely as an instrument of common witchcraft.

In the absence of rational scientific explanations for the many natural phenomena which surround them, — drought and disease, fecundity and sterility, birth and death, — it is natural that the Masai, in common with all other primitive peoples, should regard the unseen with deep fear and awe, and grasp at any opportunity offered which purports to control these mysterious factors in their lives. They believe the laibon to be capable of controlling these unseen forces; he is the intermediary between themselves and the supernatural. His blessing will assure prosperity, his charms and rituals can alleviate an existing calamity, and his power of foretelling the future enables steps to be taken to ward off an impending catastrophe.

It is extremely difficult to ascertain the strength of these beliefs amongst individual Masai, but it is considered that the majority of the Kissongo hold them implicitly. Some areas, e.g. Kibaya, have a reputation for consulting the laibon more frequently than others, but none the less the beliefs are general. The practice of the ritual may fall into temporary abeyance in certain areas, but the belief remains, and manifests itself in outward form on the advent of a drought or of a personal reminder from the laibon. Modern contacts have as yet done little to shake these beliefs. A few Christian Masai are completely sceptical; others may have their doubts, but when the occasion arises feel that they had better do what they are told, 'to be on the safe side'. One of the chief factors which guarantees the maintenance of these beliefs is the age grade system. From early adolescence the future leaders of the tribe, the *laiguenak* and *ingobir*, are frequently taken to the laibon by their guardians, the *il piron* elders. The lengthy discussions beforehand, the actual journey, the reverential attitude of the elders to the laibon, the ritual, the mysterious voice in the darkened hut foretelling the future, all these must make a deep impression on the youths. This in turn is spread to the rest of their age-mates when they return home and perform the ordained ceremony.

There seems little doubt therefore that so long as the age-grade system is maintained in its present form these beliefs, and the consequent power they give the laibon, will be perpetuated. True, as education progresses, this power will decrease, but disbelief will dissociate a youth from his age-mates, and consequently his influence on others will be small; on the

9:Fosbrooke G-5 (1936-1948) 1948 FL12 Masai FL12
Kisonko

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other hand those brought up in awe of the laibon are in a position to influence large numbers of their fellows. For this reason it is probable that these beliefs will be held for many years to come, although their intensity and their outward manifestations may decrease, as in fact they appear to be doing in Kenya to-day.

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The time has now come to summarise this section and to draw our conclusions. In doing so it will be necessary to differentiate between the Masai attitude to the laibon, and the laibon's attitude to the Masai. The Masai do not regard, nor have they ever in the past regarded the laibon as a chief or lawgiver. They regard him as an intermediary between themselves and the unseen, and in consequence hold him in great respect and awe. Any order that he cared to give, suitably disguised as a prophecy, would therefore be obeyed; the laibon is thus a great potential political leader. But here the attitude of the laibon to the Masai comes in. It may be that in the past a laibon has felt responsibility for the welfare of the tribe, but there are very few instances of this taking practical form. At the present time one can only judge the attitude of the laibon to the Masai on facts, and these reveal that he thinks only of himself and not of the tribe. With the possible exception of Lenana, no laibon has made any effort to assist the tribe to adapt themselves to modern conditions. Rather the reverse; for their own personal profit they have made themselves the focus of the tribe's intense conservatism. When cut off from one source of income (a share of raided stock), they have used their powers to develop an alternative (extended sale of charms).

12: Fox G-5 (1925-1930) 1930 FL12 Masai FL12
Kenya

Functions of Laibons.—A *Laibon* is far more than a mere medicine man or purveyor of charms. His function would seem to approach more closely that of a chief priest of the Israelites, and the N-Kidongi sub-clan might be compared to the Levite tribe. 991

He is, or should be, the religious head of the tribe. No ceremony nor important enterprise should be undertaken without his blessing, in return for which he should be given a large present of cattle. He prays to God on behalf of the people. On one occasion Sendeyo arrived in my camp before sunrise, just as I was about to start on an excursion into the deep forest, and made a prayer for our safety. We stood round him and responded "*Na-Ai*" (= "O God") at the pauses; I was too much taken by surprise to remember the details of the prayer except that it was very impressive, and that he ended by giving his genealogy (*see* Hollis, p. 326) in order to show that the prayer was one which should receive attention.

The *Laibons* use charms (*indolingoi*) for various purposes, and their employment is invariably accompanied by prayer to God. I have a few of the charms in my possession and have been instructed in their use, under promise not to reveal my knowledge. Sendeyo once said to me that a good heart was better than charms. [989]

Witchcraft.—Although the *Laibons* use charms, witchcraft, *i.e.* harmful magic, is not indispensable to their office. Some of them, however, are alleged to have made use of it. Witchcraft is not indigenous to the Masai. Such persons as I have found practising black magic in Masai country have learnt it from the Kikuyu of Nyeri District or from the Meru. 954 [179]

Religion.—The Masai believe in one God whom they call En-Gai, which is the same word as they use for rain. They say that God is one, but permeates everything. He may be prayed to as inhabiting a wood, a stream, the earth, etc., but He is all the same God. The Masai only use short prayers such as "Na-Ai" (O God) and "*Na-Ai mikiae*" (O God do not strike me) except for the prayers at *Il Pul* and those of *Laibons* already mentioned. Some, if not all, of the ceremonies have a religious significance, but I cannot give details without further experience. 976

Superstitions.—There are certain old trees with holes in them, in which a Masai puts a handful of grass or leaves when he passes. They have told me that this is equivalent to a prayer, "May I live to be old like this tree." 989

A traveller sometimes puts a stone in the fork of the branch of a tree near the track in order that he may arrive at his destination before nightfall.

There are a few places where the passer-by should tie a knot in the grass. I am uncertain of the reason for this.

When the new moon is first seen people pluck grass and throw it towards the moon, saying, "*Injuki o sowa ol ondo sanisho ol dorop*"—"Give me the body which is long and I give you the short." I do not know the significance of this.

13:Huntingford E-4 (no date) 1953 FL12 Masai FL12

Warriors do their hair in pigtails, *ol-taika;* other people of both sexes shave their heads periodically. In both sexes the ear-lobes are pierced and elongated, and the two lower middle incisor teeth are removed. Cicatrized patterns are often made on the upper part of the body in both sexes.

Iron-work

Iron is used for weapons (spear and sword of warriors, and arrows of elders), axes, knife-blades, razors, and many of the ornaments of both sexes. The spears and swords are distinctive of Masai culture and, together with the shield and *e-rrap* arm-clamp, separate the Masai and Nandi culturally from other Nilo-Hamites. Spears are of three shapes: a small leaf-shaped blade with long neck, long shaft, and medium butt; the great " shovel-blade " with short neck, long shaft, and medium butt; and the long-bladed winged spear with short shaft and long butt. The colour of the short shaft of the winged war-spear is important: senior warriors have black shafts, others reddish ones, and the demand of junior warriors for the privilege of black shafts is a significant factor in the tension that arises between senior and junior warriors. The sword has a long narrow blade and is kept in a red leather sheath attached to the belt. The winged spear-blade and sword have been borrowed by the Nandi, Kipsikis, Keyo, Kony and others of the Nandi division, together with the arm-clamp; the Kikuyu have imitated them.

Other Objects

Clubs are made of wood or rhinoceros horn. Shields are roughly oval, about 3 ft. long, and made of buffalo or giraffe hide on a light wooden framework; according to Merker, the old form of shield was circular and (if the scale of his Fig. 34*b* is correct) about 1 ft. in diameter. Stools are cut out of a solid block of wood and have three legs. Horns are used for summoning people, but there are no musical instruments or drums.

Ritual and Beliefs

Religion

Little has been recorded of Masai religious beliefs, except such obvious facts as the invocation of *Enk-ai* (the Masai word for God, rain, and sky). As to ancestor-worship, it is generally said that the Masai do not believe in an after-life (said also of the Suk); but the alleged belief that the soul of a laibon or rich man turns into a snake implies some belief in the survival of the soul. This matter needs careful investigation; and Merker's statement that each Masai is taken to paradise by his guardian angel and let in by *Enk-ai* if he has been good is alien to Nilo-Hamitic thought. *Enk-ai* is recognized as a creator, and is prayed to by both men and women. Some of the prayers recorded include an invocation to both *Enk-ai* and Mbatiany, the laibon who died *c.* 1890; thus Thomson heard the Il-Aikipiak praying to *Enk-ai* and Mbatiany, and the Nandi war dance after a victory, recorded by Hollis after Mbatiany's death, contained also an invocation to *Enk-ai* and Mbatiany. The " minor deity called Neiterkob " which Thomson thought was an earth-spirit, appears in Krapf's book as the Neiterukob, " the mediator between God and men." But the Masai word *naiterukop* means no more than " that which began the earth," and thus would seem really to apply to *Enk-ai* in his role as creator. *Enk-ai*, god, is grammatically feminine, and his wife *Ol-apa*, the moon, is grammatically masculine.

Death and Burial

The bodies of most people are put out for the hyenas, to the west of the kraal, and laid on the left side so that the face looks eastward, with the legs drawn up, the head supported by the left hand, and the right hand across the breast. The

/15 cont./
the El asiti also have their own idiom, which will be briefly discussed at a later place.

Corresponding to the uniformity in language, the number words are the same among the Masai and Wakuafi, whereas the Asá and El asiti have their own words for only a few numbers, but in general always make use of the ones used by the other two branches. One finds a complete correspondence for all three branches in their religious view, and the manner of circumcision customary among both sexes. The peculiar circumcision of the boys is practiced by no other people at all, with the exception of one lineage of the Tatoga, closely related to the Masai people. In birth and death, too, all three have the same customs, while in the rest of their customs one finds only unessential differences which are based solely on the difference in their external way of life. The most striking proof for the three branches' belonging together, however, lies in their descent.

The people as a whole are divided into three large tribes, the L aiser, the El mulelyan, and the El mengana, each of which is made up of a number of lineages, and every Asá, as well as every Ol kuafi and Ol massani, is a representative of one of these lineages.

If we now concern ourselves further with the ethnography of the Masai in particular, which is at the same time that of the Wakuafi, we are thereby including the ethnographic traits of the entire people; the stressing of individual differences that have developed among the Wandorobo in the course of time and under the influence of changed conditions will be reserved for the third part.

/16/ Second Part

I.

Tribes, lineages, sublineages. -- The En gidon lineage. -- The chief: his rule and policy, magic medicines, genealogical tree, village, ceremonies, foods. -- The sorcerers. -- The El kiborōn lineage. -- The rainmakers.

Every tribe (en gischomi) is divided, as has already been mentioned, into a number of lineages (ol gelata, el gelat). Among these, in turn, one distinguishes principal lineages (ol gelata kitok)

/203 cont./

XXI.

000 Religion. -- Monotheism. -- Religious doctrine. -- Explanation of natural phenomena. -- Prayers. -- Supplication feasts. -- Sacrifices. -- The snakes. -- Evil spirits. -- Sorcery. -- Amulets. -- Evil eye.

177 In a comparison of the ethnography of the Masai with that of the
• 771 peoples neighboring them, living around them, no chasm as deep as in the field of religious outlook appears anywhere. Whereas in almost all the areas of ethnography we otherwise find a more or less strong influencing of the latter by the former -- from more external things, /204/ such as ornaments and weapons, to more deeply incisive social changes, such as, for example, the shaping of warriordom after the Masai model -- the religion of the two shows a sharp separation, which nowhere permits any interplay of the one in the other. In sharp contrast to the anthropolatry, the worship of departed human spirits, and the polydemonism of the Negroes, occurring in all forms and gradations, stands the simple, straightforward monotheism of the Masai.

776 Their god is called 'Ng ai and is an incorporeal being, a spirit.
779 The people do not think about his appearance. The making of pictorial or sculptural representations of God would be a sin, according to his commandment given to the Masai. God is the creator of the world, the earth, and all that it harbors. He governs everything through his will. He is the guardian of the natural and moral order of the world. The laws and commandments that are valid in the life of the people and of the individual are expressions of his will. God is almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, benign, infinite, eternal.
[771] 'Ng ai najollo = God knows it, 'Ng ai naischa el dunganak, 'n dogirin sidan = God gives human beings the good things, ol bai 'l Eng ai = it is the will of God, are words that one can hear every day, and they are not often used thoughtlessly, for a deep religiosity is peculiar to the Masai generally. God's benevolence forgives human beings a great deal and for a long time. Yet human beings are too weak and sinful, so that God has to punish from time to time for

/300 cont./

II.

000 A comparative consideration of the traditions of the Masai and Israelites, with regard to the reports of the primeval-age myths found in Babylonia: creation of the world, the creation of the first human beings, paradise and the fall, the deluge, the Kenites of the Bible, the blacksmiths of the Masai, the deception about the right of the first-born, Moses-Marumi-Musana, etc., circumcision, the naming of God, the fiery serpent, the ten commandments. -- Some further points of contact.

*12 *773 *771 •771 The strictly monotheistic religion of the Masai and the similarity, often going as far as correspondence, of their primeval-age myths with those of the people of Israel, known to us from the Bible, demand a more detailed and comparative study. The fact that here a comparison can extend only to a few main points and even these can be dealt with only briefly and sketchily is to be explained by the fact that these lines are originating in African solitude.

Recent research, especially the excavations in the ancient Near Eastern center of civilization, on the soil of the Babylonian Empire, has traced back to Babylonian origin a whole series of Old Testament ideas from the primeval age. The reasons for this were by and large the following:

It was found that ideas similar to those, for example, contained in the Biblical /301/ myths about the creation of the world, paradise, the deluge, etc., were already established in writing or pictorially in the civilized state of Babel /Babylonia/ at a time when the ancient Israelites still inhabited the Arabian-Syrian steppes as culture-poor nomads. There was further found in those ideas in part a specifically Babylonian character such that it seemed as though they could have arisen in their Biblical form only in a land such as Babylonia, but not in the arid steppes, or even only in the atmosphere of Babylonian mental life and not in the conceptual sphere of the herdsmen of ancient Israel. Finally, one also had to reckon with the fact that Kanaan /Canaan/, the land in which the Israelites became sedentary after their long nomadism, was saturated with Babylonianism during